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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's prayer will be offered by our guest Chaplain, the Reverend William K. Simmons, of Lexington, KY.

We are glad to have you with us.

PRAYER

The guest Chaplain, the Reverend William K. Simmons, offered the following prayer:

Let's pray together.

Almighty God, this body gathers today to conduct the business of the Republic. We pause to give thanks for Your blessing on our land and to seek Your continued care. Honor, we pray, the deliberations of these, selected by the people to represent them in guiding our Nation toward the goals of freedom, justice, and equality for all. Give each Member a sense of Your presence as he or she deliberates; may their judgments be those You can and will bless.

We also remember the families of these present. Care for them whether they be here or back home. Keep them safe within Your protective Spirit.

May we always be mindful that governance is a sacred pact between the government and its people. Let us not in this seat of power fail to hear them. Bless these Senators this day and inspire them to serve the people with wisdom and humility. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable WAYNE ALLARD, a Senator from the State of Colorado, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The able Senator from Colorado is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. ALLARD. Mr. President, on behalf of the leader, I announce that today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12 noon. Following morning business, it is hoped that an agreement can be reached regarding the consideration of the marriage tax penalty legislation. If an agreement is reached, Senators may expect votes throughout the day. If no agreement is reached, the Senate will remain in morning business, with Senators speaking for up to 5 minutes each. As previously announced, the Senate will consider the budget resolution conference report and the McConnell stock options bill prior to the Easter recess.

I thank my colleagues for their attention and yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Nevada.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that during the period of morning business today Senators DORGAN and DURBIN be recognized for up to 15 minutes each. This would kind of balance out the time on both sides; that is, after the 2-hour block of time that has been set aside for others already.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLARD). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there shall now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12 noon, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the time until 11:30 a.m. shall be under the control of the Senator from Kansas, Mr. ROBERTS, and the Senator from Georgia, Mr. CLELAND.

The Senator from Nevada is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, it is my understanding that Senator CLELAND and I have 2 hours reserved under the previous order in morning business. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is correct. Your time is reserved until 11:30 a.m.

NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I am going to begin my remarks. We had originally intended for Senator CLELAND to begin this dialog. But I am going to go ahead since he has been detained. Then he can follow me. I do not think that is going to upset the order at all.

I thank my good friend, the distinguished Senator from Georgia, for this continued initiative and for his leadership in continuing our bipartisan foreign policy dialog.

As I said back in February during our first discussion, our objective is to try to achieve greater attention, focus, and

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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